

are formed in the upper surface of the flange 40, as viewed in Fig. 6a, and the cylinder 42 of the endplate assembly 24' is configured to accept a graft basket 96.

AS.
05/24/07
[0032] The graft basket 96 is formed by a cylindrical wall 98 and a base 100 which define a cavity 102 suitable for receiving graft material (not shown). The cylindrical wall 98 need not be perfectly cylindrical but rather may be tapered or angled. The wall 98 and the base 100 are provided with a plurality of apertures 104 suitable to promote tissue ingrowth and vascularization. The apertures 104 may permit a line of sight to form through the apertures 34 of body 22, through the bore 32, and through the basket 96. *having a bottom surface*

[0033] The basket 96 is designed to fit entirely within the bore 48 of the cylinder 42, and one or more positioning tabs 112 project outwardly from the cylindrical wall 98 of the basket and into the recesses 94. The recesses 94 are aligned and sized to receive the positioning tabs 112 in a press fit or a snap fit to locate the basket 96 within the cylinder 42 as shown in FIG. 6b.

[0034] It is understood that another endplate assembly can also be provided which is similar to the endplate assembly 24' and can be connected as part of the assembly 20 as shown in Figs. 1-5.

[0035] According to the embodiment of Figs. 7a and 7b, an endplate assembly 24'' is provided that includes components that are substantially identical to the components forming the endplate assembly 24, which components are given the same reference numerals. According to the embodiment of Figs. 7a and 7b, the inner wall of the cylinder 42 is provided with threads 116 and is configured to receive a graft basket 118 which is similar to the basket 96 of the previous embodiment and includes identical components of the latter basket which are given the same reference numerals.

[0036] The basket 118 does not have tabs but, rather, has a outwardly extending lip 120 integrally formed with the cylindrical wall 98. The outer circumference of the lip 120 is provided with external threads 122 which threadedly engage the threads 116 of the cylinder 42 to secure the basket 118 in the cylinder, as shown in FIG. 7b. It is understood that another endplate assembly can also be provided which is similar or identical to the endplate assembly 24'' and can be connected as part of the assembly 20 as shown in Figs. 1-5.

[0037] Endplate assembly 24' or 24'' and its corresponding and opposite endplate assembly may both be threaded sufficiently far onto opposite end portions of the body 22 to permit the assembled components to be inserted into the vertebral column 10. Graft material may be packed into the body 22. The graft baskets 96 or 118 can be fit into the endplate